

School Board votes to layoff 17 teachers

Belt-tightening move may end in hirings this fall

BY SUE BUCK
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Farmington School Board Members unanimously voted to lay off 17 teachers Tuesday night. The teachers received formal notification Wednesday morning.

Trustee Bobbie Feldman was absent.

The teachers were hired in the last year. The terminations are effective June 5, the conclusion of the 2000-2001 school year. "They have first call-back rights," said Farmington Superintendent Bob Maxfield. He hopes all will be called back either by the end of the school year or the beginning of the next.

"It's that fluid," Maxfield said. He cited a number of factors which contributed to the decision. They included declining elementary school enrollment, a desire to keep a balanced budget and closing of the year-round program at Gill Elementary.

The district has also asked parents to enroll their children in their home schools and indi-

cate a preference for the early childhood center with the understanding that the home school sections need to be filled first.

"It's a combination of all of those factors with a general tightening up," Maxfield said. "We will have potentially less staff next year. Because we don't know where the openings are, we need to create a layoff list."

The school district operates under a \$130 million budget. There are about 930 teachers and 12,000 students. Budget parameters set last year included keeping a fund equity of 8-12 percent, Maxfield said.

"We said, 'What will it cost to run this program next year?'" Maxfield said. "All in all we said, 'Will we be able to afford it with the revenue coming in?' When we did that process, we discovered we would be approximately \$3 million short. That's unacceptable. We're in that mode right now."

Increased salary, benefit and utility costs are also part of the picture, he said.

The last layoffs were two years ago, Maxfield said. "I've been

here seven years. We have probably had them for three of the seven years. I don't think we have gone into the next school year with anyone still on the layoff list."

The teachers are from Highmeadow Common Campus, Beechview, Woodcreek, Kenbrook, Forest and Longacre Elementary Schools; Power, Warner and O. E. Dunckel Middle Schools; and Harrison High School. All are members of the Farmington Education Association.

"We expect the majority will be called back," said Larry Lobert, executive director of personnel.

Factors affecting the layoffs include the terms of the contract between the Farmington School Board and the Farmington Education Association, Michigan law, teachers returning from leaves of absence and changing district staffing needs, Lobert said.

"We hope we can call all of them back," said Tom Chrzanowski, president of the FEA, the teachers' union. "We

feel confident they will be called back."

Chrzanowski, the only audience member present at Tuesday's meeting, praised Lobert's "humanistic" approach in developing a list with which he felt comfortable. The list was pared from one which originally had about 27 teachers, Lobert said.

"The process went as well as it could," Chrzanowski said.

The plan was to have the building principals speak to the teachers privately on Monday and Tuesday, he said.

"Is there any reason the overwhelming number of these teachers are females?" asked Trustee Jack Ingh.

Lobert said these positions are still traditionally filled by women. About 50 percent of the staff has been hired in the last five or six years, Lobert said.

"We seem to be able to get the cream of the crop," said Trustee Cathy Webb.

District officials said they hope these teachers won't look elsewhere for employment in the interim, although it is their right.

MOVERS & SHAKERS

Fournier gets presidency

Jerry Fournier, executive vice president of HDS Services in Farmington Hills, was recently elected president of the Michigan Restaurant Association.



Jerry Fournier

Fournier is well acquainted with the hospitality business through managing more than 200 hospitality accounts over the past 30 years.

for HDS.

Phoenix honors resident

Phoenix Home Life Mutual Insurance Company recently honored Timothy Bearden, CLU, ChFO of Farmington Hills with the Donor's Award, which recognizes extraordinary financial advisors by making charitable donations in their names to community organizations they select. Bearden, president of Strategic Family Wealth Counselors, a family wealth counseling firm in Farmington Hills, selected the Orchard Lake Community Church in Orchard Lake to receive the donation.

Hills-based MHB branches into leasing

Michigan Heritage Bancorp., a \$117 million asset holding company for Michigan Heritage Bank, a full service commercial bank based in Farmington Hills, is pleased to announce the formation of the bank's wholly owned subsidiary, MHB Leasing Inc.

The new entity shall serve to expand the bank's capabilities in equipment leasing by providing tax-oriented true leases and other structured lease products. MHB Leasing will be assisted by Harrison Capital Corporation, a private investing firm, in the structuring and marketing of its new lease products.

Through Harrison Capital, MHB Leasing will also form a strategic alliance with Fort Street Capital, LLC, a Detroit based, certified minority-owned

equipment leasing company. This strategic alliance will assist MHB Leasing's customers in meeting their minority sourcing goals.

"These new structured lease products add considerable flexibility to our range of corporate lending and leasing products," stated Michigan Heritage Bank President Tony Albanese. "Although our primary focus will be on offering structured leases ranging in size between \$100,000 and \$1 million, we will have the resources and capabilities of providing financing for much larger transactions."

MHB Leasing's target market is primarily Michigan and the adjacent Midwest states. A broad range of asset types can be considered for its structured lease financings.

CAMPUS PIPELINE

GRADUATES

Tracey M. Kuffel and Valerie P. Rusznowski both from Farmington Hills have earned their Bachelor of Science degrees from Grand Valley State University.

INTERCOLLEGIATE ATHLETICS

Zach Burton and Garry Penta two former Farmington Area Student-Athletes are playing baseball at Kalamazoo College. Zach Burton is a Sophomore, men's baseball pitcher. He pitched 2.0 innings in Kalamazoo's 0-10 loss to Alma College on April 14. Burton's season ERA is 6.75 and he has 18 strikeouts so far with a pitching record of 1-2. The Hornets are 4-14 (overall) so far with a 1-5 MIAA conference record. Zach played baseball for Harrison High School.

Garry is in his first year,

men's baseball, playing as a pitcher and in the outfield. Garry has a pitching record of 1-4 at Kalamazoo College this season. He pitched in three innings for the Hornets last week against Alma College allowing only two hits. On the season Garry has pitched 22.2 innings, earning eight strikeouts. His ERA for the season is 6.75. Penta also plays outfield for the Hornets, he has 35 put-outs and is batting .310 with four doubles and one homerun. Garry played baseball for North Farmington High School.

WEST POINT DEAN'S

Cadet Thomas A. Beierschmitt, son of Tom and Mary Beierschmitt of Farmington Hills, was named to the dean's list for the fall semester. Cadet Fritz J. Schultes, son of Pamela Schultes of Farmington Hills,

was also named to the dean's list for the fall semester.

CO-OP STUDENTS

Fifty-five students from the University of Michigan-Dearborn's College of Arts, Sciences, and Letters completed cooperative education assignments with local employers. The students chosen from Farmington Hills include:

Jason Baldwin, Heather Bryant, Rodney Henry, Anthony Raymond and Janelle Yatooma.

STUDY ABROAD

Marie Webster, a sophomore, is one of 54 Kalamazoo College students departing for study abroad this month. She will study in Madrid, Spain, until June. Webster is a graduate of Detroit Country Day School.

TAU BETA PI

Janet Pien, daughter of William and Rosa Pien, of Farmington Hills has been elected for membership into Tau Beta Pi, the national engineering honor society. Tau Beta Pi represents the highest honor which can be achieved by an engineering student. Membership is awarded on the basis of high scholarship and exemplary character. Janet graduated from North Farmington High School in 1999, and expects to graduate with a degree in Mechanical Engineering in May of 2003.

LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE

Edward Azar, son of Edward Azar of Farmington Hills, participated in the 2001 Post Secondary State Leadership Conference at Northwood University in March.

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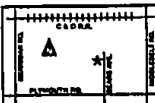
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outstanding educational opportunities being offered in the West Bloomfield School District.

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West Bloomfield School District is accepting applications on a space available basis for a limited number of openings in selected grades for the 2001-2002 school year beginning August 27, 2001.

If applications exceed available spaces, a lottery will be held as specified by state law on May 16, 2001 at 3:45 p.m. at 5810 Commerce, West Bloomfield, 48374.

